



Free Public Lecture Series, Autumn 2008

“What is Land for?”

Have we enough? Can we reconcile competing demands?

Birkbeck, University of London

in conjunction with the

Ecology and Conservation Studies Society

Increased and competing pressures on our use of land: - for wildlife, water supply and management, food production, biofuels and biomass, carbon stewardship, transport, housing and recreation – pose an escalating environmental challenge at every level. What is our long term vision for land use in the UK, and how can we achieve this?

The seven prominent speakers in this series will provide new insights and suggest possible solutions for the management of this key resource:

Join the debate. All welcome. Free ticket admission, but booking essential.

The lectures will be held in Birkbeck, University of London, WC1

For free tickets and venue details, e-mail: environment@fl.bbk.ac.uk or tel: 020 7679 1069

All lectures are from 6.30pm to 8.30 pm on the following Fridays. Doors open at 6.00pm.

- 17 October** ‘Whose land is it anyway? And how can government policy reconcile competing demands on it in an era of climate change?’
Professor Philip Lowe OBE, Director of the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme
- 24 October** ‘Farming futures: will there be room for wildlife?’
Dr Chris Stoate, Head of Research, GWCT ‘Allerton Project’ Farm.
- 31 October** ‘Integrated River Basin Management: managing land and water in an integrated way’
Pam Gilder, Head of Wildlife, Recreation, Marine and River Basin Management, Environment Agency
- 7 November** ‘Brownfield and Urban Issues’
‘The Big Brownfield Biodiversity Botch’.
Matt Shardlow, Chief Executive Officer, Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
‘Sustainable cities - a space for nature?’
Pete Massini, Future London Programme Manager, Natural England
- 14 November** ‘Eco-Towns: Will they be Eco-? Can they become Towns?’
Professor Sir Peter Hall, Bartlett Professor of Planning and Regeneration, UCL;
President, TCPA
- 21 November** ‘For ever, for everyone: What does the nation need from land?’
Tony Burton, Director of Strategy and External Affairs, The National Trust

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Notes on the Contributors and their Lectures

17 October ‘Whose land is it anyway? And how can government policy reconcile competing demands on it in an era of climate change?’

Philip Lowe is Director of the Rural Economy and Land Use (Relu) Programme of the UK Research Councils.

He has been a leading figure in the development of interdisciplinary rural studies in the UK. In 1992, he founded the Centre for Rural Economy at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, where he holds the Duke of Northumberland Chair of Rural Economy.

He has played an active role in rural policy development at the national and European levels and in the North of England. He is a member of the Science Advisory Council of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and currently chairs Defra’s Vets and Veterinary Services Working Group. For his contribution to the rural economy he was appointed OBE in 2003.

His lecture will cover the following themes:

Everyone seems to want something different from our rural land, and climate change is hotting up the arguments about food security, biofuels, flood storage and biodiversity. It seems as though any potential solutions just create more problems, as biofuels are painted as a threat to food supplies, research shows that home grown fruit and vegetables may produce more carbon than crops flown in from abroad and rural communities are vociferous in the face of suggestions that the countryside could be flooded in order to save towns. Can government policy and strategic planning really satisfy everyone’s demands?

24 October ‘Farming futures: will there be room for wildlife?’

Dr Chris Stoate is Head of Research at the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust’s ‘Allerton Project’ farm in Leicestershire.

Chris has worked with farmers and agricultural ecosystems in continental Europe and West Africa, as well as in the UK. Throughout, his work has been on integrating environmental management into productive farming systems to the benefit of farmers and the wider public. He currently co-ordinates a series of integrated research projects at and around the Allerton Project farm in Leicestershire. This work has included the development of now widely adopted agri-environment scheme habitat options through which farmers receive government funding for habitat creation and management. More recently, research has concentrated on combining the management of water as a resource and as a wildlife habitat in the predominantly agricultural Eye Brook catchment.

His lecture will cover the following themes:

Pressures on the farmed environment are growing. There is a rapid increase in the human population, and in individual consumption. Farmland is now expected to produce fuel and fibre, as well as more food. Will there be room for wildlife ... and does it matter? This lecture explores these issues, based on the intensive integrated research and practical management associated with the Allerton Project’s farm business in Leicestershire. Meeting a range of environmental and agricultural objectives simultaneously should be possible if it is based on sound integrated science, and is practically grounded.

31 October ‘Integrated River Basin Management – managing land and water in an integrated way’

Pam Gilder is Head of Wildlife, Recreation, Marine and River Basin Management at the Environment Agency.

Pam joined the Environment Agency in 2002 where she initially led on a number of national policy areas, including sustainable communities, sustainable development, transport, resource efficiency, environmental inequalities and social policy.

Before she joined the Environment Agency she worked at the Countryside Agency where she held a number of project and policy posts including Head of Public Affairs.

Earlier in her career she worked in local government, and has undertaken a number of assignments for business and industry.

Her lecture will cover the following themes:

With the continuing advancement of climate change, land management is becoming even more important. But so is the management of the water environment.

The right kinds of land use can help us manage the water environment. It can reduce water borne pollution, hold back flood water and ensure water storage. Our wetlands don't just need to stay wet for biodiversity, but for other reasons, too'. We need to manage land and water in concert. That means knowing what we want to use land (and water) for, establishing national and local priorities and agreeing cost effective actions by a number of players. We need a land use planning system that delivers those priorities, a reformed Common Agricultural Policy to incentivise land managers and new tools for managing river basins for the public good.

In this paper Pam will set out our current thinking about how we manage river basins and the contribution land use makes. The new tools and techniques being developed for the Water Framework Directive are helping to bring clarity to the relationship between land use and the state of the water environment. New classification tools are showing us, for the first time, that the ecology of our lakes, rivers and estuaries are not as good as they should be. River Basin Plans must set out how collective action can stop things getting worse and improve current conditions.

7 November ‘Brownfield and Urban Issues’

‘The Big Brownfield Biodiversity Botch’.

Matt Shardlow is Chief Executive Officer of Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust.

Matt worked at the RSPB for nine years, completing an MPhil in the restoration of invertebrate populations in a mixed arable and grazing farming system and overseeing the management and monitoring of non-avian biodiversity on the RSPB’s 115,000ha of nature reserves. In 2002 Matt helped to set up a new charity ‘Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust’ of which he is now the Chief Executive Officer. Buglife is the only organisation in Europe committed to saving all invertebrates; the charity has eight members of staff and a growing portfolio of conservation projects. Priority work areas include the sustainable management of brownfield sites; saving endangered Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species; and improving the health of freshwater ecosystems. Matt has been a Management Committee member of Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL) and is an active member of the WCL Biodiversity Working Group, representing the partnership on Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG).

His lecture will cover the following themes:

Government policy is forcing an unprecedented level of development onto Brownfield land as this is perceived to be much more acceptable to the public than building on greenfields. But it has become increasingly obvious that the current definition of Brownfield (previously developed land) includes a great many sites that are of high importance to rare and endangered species, while many ‘greenfields’ are just ploughed fields, barren of life.

Recent work by Buglife has shown over half of brownfield land in the Thames Gateway is likely to be of high importance to biodiversity, but at current rates of development it will all be lost in 20 years.

The combination of a new BAP priority habitat (Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land) and rare BAP priority species on sites that are otherwise prioritised for development creates a unique biodiversity conservation dilemma that enables us to explore how biodiversity conservation and the planning system are, and should be, working, as well as our perceptions of what wildlife needs and the how this compares to what wildlife really needs.

‘Sustainable cities - a space for nature?’

Pete Massini is Future London Programme Manager, Natural England

Despite completing a degree in Rural Environment Studies at Wye College in the heart of rural Kent, Pete has spent 20 years working in nature conservation in London. Initially employed as a conservation officer by the London Wildlife Trust, he went on to work for the London Ecology Unit and helped establish the London Biodiversity Partnership, before joining English Nature’s London team in 2000. As Manager of Natural England’s Future London programme he leads a small team responsible for spatial planning and promotion of green infrastructure. He is Natural England’s representative on the Towns and Cities workstream of the England Biodiversity Strategy and has been a long-serving Council member of the British Association of Nature Conservation (BANC) – publishers of ECOS.

His lecture will cover the following themes:

For many, the urban environment is the very antithesis of the natural environment. The aspiration to form more sustainable cities is likely to result in urban densification, a greater demand for outdoor space for people and the creation of a green infrastructure which is designed and managed primarily for practical functions such as flood management. So is there space for nature in the urban environment? If so, can we rely on the traditional approach to nature conservation as new urban landscapes are formed? The lecture will explore whether we need to think about nature conservation in urban areas differently. Whether we can make nature part of the city - not apart from the city.

14 November ‘Eco-Towns: Will they be Eco-? Can they become Towns?’

Peter Hall is Professor of Planning and Regeneration at the Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning, University College London, and President of the Town and Country Planning Association.

From 1991-94 Peter was Special Adviser on Strategic Planning to the Secretary of State for the Environment, with special reference to issues of London and South East regional planning including Thames Gateway and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. In 1998-99 he was a member of the Deputy Prime Minister’s Urban Task Force. From 2004 to 2008 he was Chair of ReBlackpool, the Blackpool Urban Regeneration Company. He is author, co-author or editor of over 35 books on urban and regional planning

and related topics – most recently, ‘London Voices London Lives’, published in 2007. He received the Gold Medal of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 2003, the Balzan International Prize in 2005 and the Sir Patrick Abercrombie Prize of the International Union of Architects in 2008.

His lecture will cover the following themes:

There has been growing controversy over the government's proposals for up to ten "eco-towns", designed to become exemplar models for sustainable 21st century living which will meet the challenge of climate change. Leading environmental organisations have challenged the selection process which has led to the shortlisting of fifteen candidates, claiming that in many cases their location - at some distance from existing cities and towns - will make them highly car-dependent and thus unsustainable in an age of increasing scarcity and rising cost of fossil fuel.

Professor Hall is President of the Town and Country Planning Association, which has been closely associated with the government in this initiative and has produced the worksheets that have set out the criteria on which eco-towns should be assessed. He is also a member of the government's Eco-Towns Challenge Panel, a group of environmental experts who are meeting with the promoters to help them improve their environmental offer.

21 November 'For ever, for everyone: What does the nation need from land?'

Tony Burton is the National Trust's Director of Strategy and External Affairs with responsibility for policy influencing, campaigning, partnerships, organisational strategy, and foresight. He is a member of the National Trust's Senior Management Team.

The National Trust is one of the world's premier conservation organisations. It is the third largest landowner in the UK, managing a priceless estate of countryside, coast, gardens and historic properties across England, Wales and Northern Ireland on behalf of the nation. The Trust contributes significantly to the economy of rural areas, supports urban regeneration and improvements to the public realm, develops skills, works with over 50,000 volunteers and is the largest out-of-classroom education provider in the country. The Trust has over 3.5 million members.

Tony joined the Trust in 2001 after 13 years at CPRE, which he left as Deputy Director. He has a strong track record of environmental and land use policy making and campaigns, particularly in the fields of land use planning, housing, rural and urban policy. He pioneered the concept of rural tranquility with CPRE and promoted the urban renaissance.

Tony was a founder trustee of Heritage Link - the voluntary sector network of organisations with a concern for the historic environment. He was chair of Wildlife & Countryside Link - bringing the wide range of environmental NGO's together - for 5 years. He was a member of the Government's Urban Task Force under the chairmanship of Lord (Richard) Rogers and was also a member of the Sounding Board for Lord Haskins' review of rural delivery arrangements and DEFRA's Better Regulation Task Force.

His lecture will cover the following themes:

The climate is changing. The pressure on land use is increasing. People's needs and desires are in flux. So what does this mean for our land? What do we really want from it in the 21st century? And who decides?

One thing is clear - despite the policy and media air time devoted to agricultural production and to the use of greenfield sites for development, the debate is moving on. Land not only provides the nation with food and places to build, but also with clean water, protection from flooding, carbon stewardship and green spaces for our health and wellbeing. We all need more of these environmental services, but they are not adequately valued or provided for. Land use planning and farming policy have an important part to play, but they are no panacea and attention should turn to other sources of funding for the answers we need.

Through better management we can get more from our land in the face of development, climate change and other pressures. We need to harness new sources of investment and new partnerships to realise land's potential to provide benefits for us all.

The Ecology and Conservation Studies Society aims to foster interest in conservation based on sound ecological principles by arranging lecture courses, field visits and meetings, and by keeping its members up to date on literature, new concepts, research and practical field studies techniques. Membership is open to all who have relevant experience or interests. Non-members are most welcome at these lectures series.

Web site: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/environment/ecssociety/index.shtml>

The Spring 2009 Free Public Lecture Series will be held on Friday evenings from **13 February to 20 March** incl. Watch our website, - details will be posted in late autumn

This lecture series will be:

All About Water

Water is the basis of life and distinguishes our 'blue planet' from others in the known universe. However it is often in short supply and its quality compromised by human activities, with profound impacts both on wildlife and on human well-being. Climate change threatens increased desertification and flooding. This series will examine issues of water ecology, supply and management, from London to the national level.